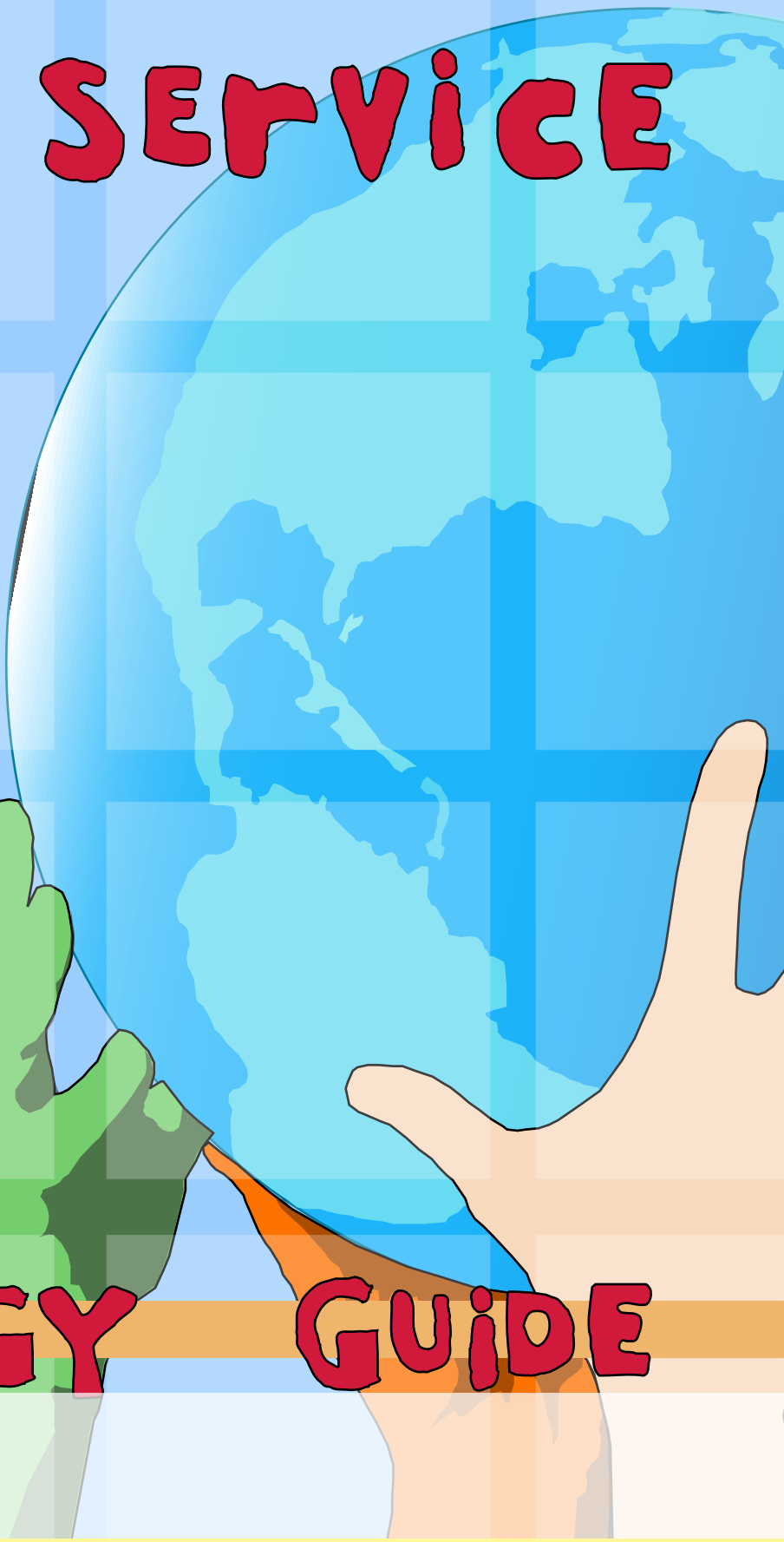
Semester of Service



Strategy Guide

YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA

Semester of Service Strategy Guide

A high-impact, strategic service-learning curriculum designed to link Martin Luther King Day of Service with Global Youth Service Day.

**"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.
You don't have to have a college degree to serve.
You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.
You only need a heart full of grace.
A soul generated by love."**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Martin Luther King was interested in big results not the short-term. So, the idea of King Day being the signal for a long-term commitment by millions of students over a semester would have warmed his heart. He always, as Gandhi did, stressed that non-violence was not passive…It was meant to turn into action: Creative action to overcome injustice and poverty and discrimination, either by courageous protest or by constructive service that made a difference in people's lives…To overcome the obstacles of inadequate education to achieve the beloved community of his dreams.

**Martin always asked us to do more than we were doing because the road ahead was still so long…The Mountain to climb was still so tall.
The Semester of Service is just that opportunity to do more."**

Harris Wofford
Colleague and Lawyer for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"But Martin Luther King said something else. He said he didn't want to be a Good Samaritan. He said I admire the Good Samaritan. But I don't want to spend my life picking up people by the side of the road after they've been beaten up. I want to change the Jericho Road. I want to create a road where people live and work together as brothers, where the don't get beaten up, where the police officers protect them, where the street lights work, where there are jobs and educational opportunity, and where we really make our dreams a reality. And so the challenge for us as volunteers is to continue the tradition of institutionalizing the spirit that blesses us."

Ambassador Andrew Young
Friend and Colleague of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Semester of Service Strategy Guide

Introduction

The Semester of Service Strategy Guide functions as a supplement to the Global Youth Service Day Service-Learning Curriculum Guide. In this text, you will find information to help you take a community service lesson plan or volunteer effort and create a semester-long service-learning curriculum. Implementing a semester-long service learning curriculum is a strategic way to reach authentic, sustainable and long-term service goals with your students. Instead of episodic acts, semester-long projects that include planning, research, action, relationship-building, leadership and reflection will allow young people and educators to collaborate on and commit to solving some of the most important and challenging issues facing our global world.

Together, Youth Service America (YSA) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) encourage you to launch your Semester of Service project on Martin Luther King Day of Service (MLK) (January 21, 2008) and culminate it on Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) (April 25-27, 2008). The goal is that by linking these two important dates with a service-learning project, youth, teachers and community members will be able to engage in both high-impact service work and meaningful learning.

During your Semester of Service, consider recognizing and utilizing other program-relevant periods as teaching moments that will help strengthen your issues-based work and service activities. Dates to keep in mind include Black History Month, Earth Day, Women's History Month, World Health Day, and César Chávez Day. For more dates and ideas, please see the January through June of 2008 Seasons of Service Calendar at the end of this guide.

While the Semester of Service Guide is directed at teachers, it can easily be translated for community groups. Many of the strategies listed below are equally pertinent to non-school service-learning work. Yet, in order for a Semester of Service project and curriculum to be successful within a school, it is necessary for topics such as Academic Standards and Time Requirements to be addressed.

Youth Service America would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the development of this guide:

> Kaitlin Thurman, Service-Learning Manager, Semester of Service Strategy Guide Author
> Liv Harrison, Semester of Service Strategy Guide Graphic Designer
> Jon Camfield, Director of ICT, Semester of Service Strategy Guide Assistance

What Counts?

Mapping Service-Learning in Comparison to Volunteering & Community Service

The most important thing to remember in any service-learning project is that all forms of service count. Whether it's one day of cleaning up your community or a year of combating worldwide hunger, every service deed makes an impact. Yet, a Semester of Service is designed as a vehicle to extend that day of cleaning up your community and turn it into a strategic plan of action with the goal of sustainable change. Below, you will find a diagram and definitions of the various forms of service or "levels of engagement:"

The positive aspect about these "levels of engagement," is that one can lead to another. While most youth start off volunteering because of a personal interest and others will perform community service because of a school responsibility, all of these entry points can lead to service-learning - nothing is fixed and one can always move back and forth.

Volunteering: This is the most common form of service. When you volunteer, you work for free and focus on the situation that needs serving. An example of volunteering would be offering your time in a soup kitchen and helping to provide the recipients with food.

Community Service: The difference between community service and volunteering is that often it can be a mandatory form of service that includes a specific number of hours that one is required to serve. Although community service is not always an obligation, it is an out-of-the-classroom service effort that does not explicitly place emphasis on purposeful learning or citizenship.

Service-Learning: Learning in Deed states that service-learning is a "teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning." Meaningful service can imply various things depending on the focus of the practitioner, school or community organization. Yet, it is important to consider that one's service should be strategic in addressing real community needs and unmet global issues through critical action, questioning, civic outcomes, reflection and sustainable change goals.

For a deeper understanding of service-learning, please see the National Youth Leadership Council article, Toward Research-Based Standards for K-12 Service-Learning, where they have outlined eight components of effective service-learning practice.

http://www.nylc.org/rc_downloadfile.cfm?emoid=14:703&property=download&mode=download%20-

	Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service Learning
1	Curriculum Integration: embedding service-learning experiences in curricular goals and standards that drive student learning of concepts, content, and skills in academic disciplines and cocurricular settings.
2	Reflection: facilitating continuous reflection before, during, and after the service experiences — using multiple, cognitively challenging methods to encourage critical and creative thinking that addresses learning objectives.
3	Youth Voice: engaging the vision and leadership of young people as valued contributors to society by integrating their ideas into the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of ser vice-learning experiences.
4	Diversity: fostering civil discourse and democratic values through the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences, and through a respect for all learners.
5	Meaningful Ser vice: applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills to community and civic needs in real-world environments.
6	Process Monitoring: analyzing student reflections and assessment measures, in combination with project and partner evaluation data, for continuous review and improvement.
7	Duration: ensuring that ser vice and learning experiences are of sufficient intensity and duration (or are equal to one semester), so that all phases of planning, through project evaluation, are included
8	Reciprocal Partnerships: leveraging community assets and promoting collaborative communication and interaction among stakeholders.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has"

Margaret Mead

Objectives of a Semester-Long Service-Learning Curriculum

Academic Achievement: To ensure that students' are developing as learners, academic achievement must be an essential objective of a Semester of Service curriculum. In Shelly H. Billig's article entitled Using Evidence to Make the Case for Service-Learning as an Academic Achievement Intervention in K-12 Schools, she states that, "Service-Learning, when implemented with high quality, yields statistically significant impact on students' academic achievement, civic engagement, acquisition of leadership skills, and personal/social development." While many of the other factors Billig mentions will be addressed in later parts of this guide, in tandem with service-learning's experiential and citizenship goals, it is crucial that a student's concept understanding, test scores, GPA's, cognitive development and graduation completion are advanced and supported.

Diversity: Service-learning should foster diversity, both with the students, partnering organizations, service recipients, and issues being addressed. Service-learning is an opportunity for educators to celebrate students' diverse backgrounds and identities while promoting sensitivity to and relationships with other communities. Lastly, taking into account studies that show a disparity in the types of youth volunteering and CNCS's brief on Leveling the Path to Participation, a Semester of Service diversity initiative should deliberately include students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities and other youth not traditionally asked to serve. Diversity is inclusive, so addressing this goal at the beginning of a service-learning curriculum is crucial.

Skill Building: Young people have many skills they bring to the classroom. Whether it is creativity, logic, technical ability or public speaking, it is important to hone into and promote these skills so that everyone has a successful role within the project. In addition, because a major component of service-learning is working with communities, public officials and organization leaders, students must also be equipped with skills that will enable them to be confident in the field and taken seriously.

Critical-Thinking & Problem-Solving: When students link learning with high-impact service work and civic engagement, they are prompted to think critically and problem solve through structured and analytical reflection. Engaging with any community need or sociopolitical issue can ignite in youth not only empathy but passion for how to strategically solve global problems and create systemic change.

Youth Voice & Leadership: At its best, service learning is a youth-centered, youth-empowered, youth-led education that allows students to choose the topics that they want to address, the communities they want to serve and the ways in which these issues will directly relate to their learning subject. Enabling voice and leadership can enhance an educator's relationship with his or her students and empower the youth to see their role in service work as both individually and collectively transformative.

Civic Engagement & Outcomes

The combination of active learning and participatory citizenship that takes place during a Semester of Service allows students to experience the effects of being civically engaged. For younger students, this civic engagement may result in them talking openly about their community and showing concern for people in need. For older youth, this can mean sparking interest in politics, voting, and activism. Through a semester-long service curriculum, students need to be given copious opportunities to exercise traits representative of citizenship. In What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy Westheimer and Kahne say,

> **"Truly effective citizens [need] the opportunity to analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces and to take part in projects through which they might develop skills and commitments for working collectively to improve society. "**

In your civic engagement initiatives, consider linking up with programs such as YSA's ServiceVote 2008. ServiceVote will link youth service and public policy with the 2008 Presidential Election. The goal is to encourage young people, even if they're not of voting age, to consider how political leaders affect issues young people address through service work. ServiceVote affords students the chance to connect their service work, global concerns and engagement with diverse communities back to the 2008 Presidential candidates and their agendas.

For more information, please visit http://servicevote.org/.

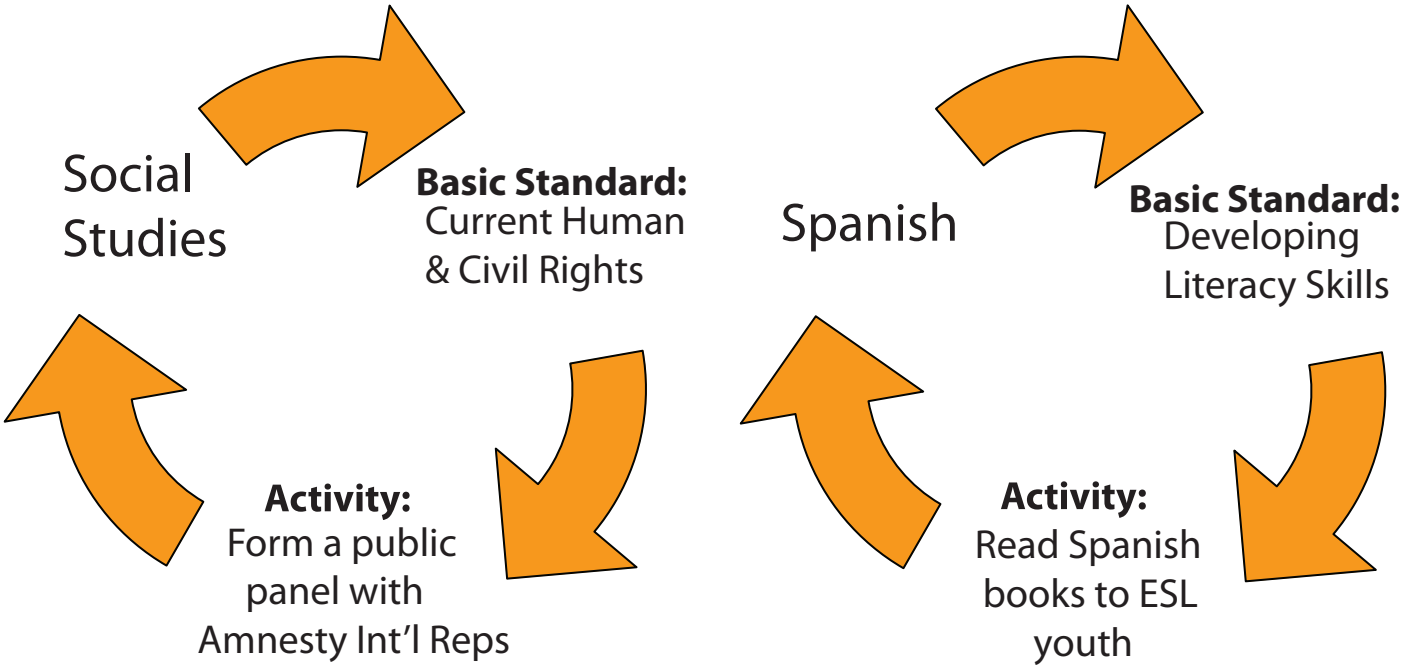
Connecting to Academic Standards

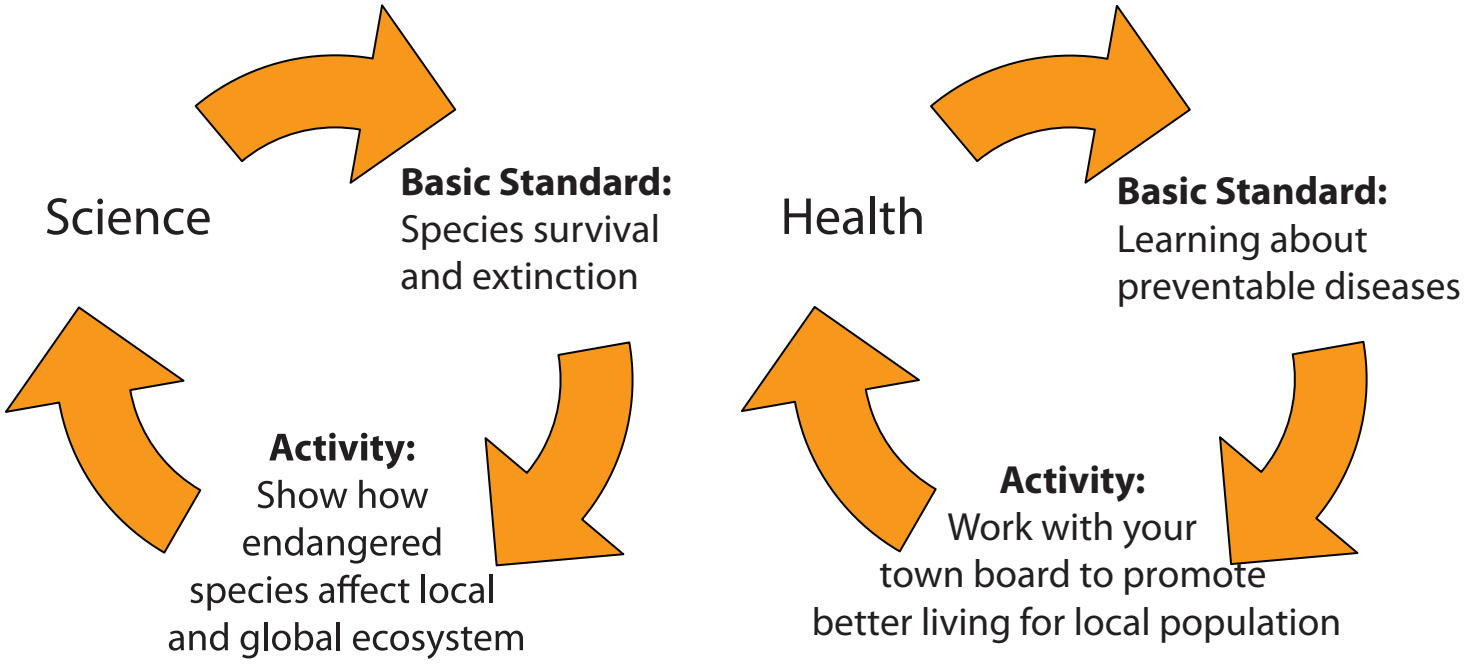
In an article entitled Service-Learning – Alignment with State Standards, author Terry Pickeral, Executive Director of The Compact for Learning and Citizenship at the Education Commission of the States, says that, "A simple belief in the intrinsic goodness of service-learning is important but will, unfortunately, not win the support of many policy-makers, parents, teachers, superintendents or students. The long-term presence of service-learning is dependent upon well-crafted curricula that is combined with convincing assessments and aligned with state standards."

Incorporating state standards into service-learning curriculum is a must, both for the sake of academic achievement and learning development. A positive sequence to follow is first to consider what project will best support your students' learning and community participation and then to regard what activities within your project will allow them to show skillful application of your state's standards. By looking at service-learning as the way you teach – a strategy or methodology – as opposed to an occasional project, you will not have to compromise your academic goals. Focus on intentional connections between the service project and your standards.

Due to the Semester of Service's length, ability to align with an academic calendar and format, there are significant opportunities to incorporate lesson plans and activities that will support a teacher's and a school's need to meet state standards. Lastly, by connecting service-work with the standards-based, accountability system of No Child Left Behind, students will see that what they are doing in school has connection and meaning in the world and that it is possible to link real-life contexts and experiences with theory and school practice.

Following are four examples to help you think of connecting your subject standards to basic service-learning activities:





Please note that while these examples do not represent real state content standards, they are basic examples of how an educator can intentionally connect service-learning curriculums and activities with academic requirements.

Rethinking the Teacher's Role

According to Latin roots, to educate means "to draw out." Draw out what?

Paulo Freire said that education, at its best, "becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

Combining the above quote and the word's Latin roots, education would therefore - at its best - mean to "draw out" a student's ability or better yet, desire, to change the world.

Freire, a well-know educational theorist, is best recognized for his opposition to what he termed, the "banking" concept. "Banking" means that a teacher deposits information into a student and that the student is an empty account to be filled. Freire criticized this method of teaching because it means that students are not active learners. Instead, Freire felt that teaching and learning should be one-and-the-same, allowing for the teacher to be the student and the student to be the teacher. This belief means that everyone learns, everyone educates, and everyone leads.

Co-educating is a vital component of a service-learning curriculum. Instructionally, teachers and trainers should re-envision their role as lateral to the students and not hierarchical. In order for students to gain the most from service-learning, it is important that educators democratically engage their students in order for the experiential learning and teaching relationship to be reciprocal.

To learn more about the above concepts, please follow these links:

http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-2.html

http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/socl/education/DemocracyandEducation/toc.html

Curriculum Outline

One of the most important factors in designing your Semester of Service curriculum is that it be authentic in connecting to students' lives, their development, and the issues they want to address. There are many ways to accomplish meaningful learning and in most descriptions of a service-learning project, you will see that projects are grouped into four stages. The goal is that by breaking the curriculum into intentional stages, a greater level of genuine learning occurs with tangible, "real world" connections.

While some aspects of each stage – i.e. reflection and strategic thinking - will be transferable throughout the entire curriculum, by following the below sequence, educators can foresee that skills and activities are built upon each other ensuring that the project is continuously strengthened. Throughout the rest of this document, you will find detailed descriptions of the four stages, including key elements, questions, objectives, project ideas, and resources.

Four Stages

i. Preparation

ii. Action

iii. Reflection & Evaluation

iv. Celebration & Demonstration

Stage one: Preparation

During the Preparation stage, students will define service-learning, talk about subjects that are important to them and democratically, as co-educators, choose a local, national and/or global issue that they want to study and serve. This stage is where they will build upon existing skills and learn new ones. It is where they will discuss and break down preconceived assumptions regarding service work, "other" communities, world issues and social concerns. It is where they will learn to teamwork, gain relationship skills, think strategically, research, and plan a detailed and intentionally designed project. Preparation is where their role as change-makers will begin to be shaped.

Documenting & Researching the Need

Documenting the need of the service issue is crucial to the structure and comprehension of one's project. Outline why and for what reasons it is important to research, engage with, and seek change for the selected issue. Active research and investigation will heighten everyone's knowledge of the situation, its history, and contemporary role in our world. If it's addressing poverty within a particular community, study everything from the area's demographics to its economic infrastructure. Whatever factors you deem most important, make sure that this information proves that there is a strong community need so that you can use your findings to present to public officials and others who might support or donate to your project.

One objective to keep in mind while researching unmet national or global issues is the subsequent economic impact of engaging in service work surrounding these topics. For example, the University of Vermont (UVM) conducted a business service-learning course in early 2000 that asked students to address unemployment and poverty in the Old North End section of Burlington, the same town that is home to UVM itself. The goal was that by addressing the issue and researching how the University could leverage job opportunities for their disadvantaged neighbors that potentially a trickle-down-effect would happen and ultimately a more sustainable, thriving economy would be supported. By addressing local issues through service work, the students were engaging in a type of urban revitalization and economic development initiative that would ultimately benefit the entire community, not just the service recipients.

Encourage your students to address and analyze the same type of outcomes and possible connections. For example, if your class is tutoring 10 impoverished students to aid them in raising their test scores, could this subsequently mean that the same 10 tutored students will increase their chances of graduating from high school and therefore earn more money than one who drops out, also resulting in a decrease in the amount of individuals collecting unemployment? Whether it is math, economics, language arts or science, consider these correlations to the larger context when referring back to the curriculum content and learning.

Outlining Student & Teacher Objectives

After the students have unanimously decided on a service project, speak to them about writing down and defining their goals. For example, a project that entails studying foster children's rights in the United States could have many directions. Do your students want to provide a voice for youth in foster care? Do they want to see more children placed with families? Do they want to challenge why half a million young people are in the foster system to begin with?

"Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another."
John Dewey

As the teacher, it is equally important to articulate your own goals and objectives. Ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Do you want to promote scientific, technological, and analytical proficiency?
- Do you want to develop reading and writing skills?
- Do you want to see students become concerned citizens?
- Do you want students to realize their potential for global impact?
- Do you want to build relationships and communication skills?
- Do you want them to better understand the geographical world?
- Do you want them to care about multicultural issues?

Goals should be set with purpose and intention while being about both academic skills and youth development. Map out your goals and standards in a simple chart like the one below:

Semester of Service Learning Goals	State Standards Addressed

Preconceived Assumptions, Values & Attitudes

Teachers and students do not come to a classroom as a blank moral slate. Everyone has their own personal influences, beliefs, and identities. It is important to create an Identity or Beliefs lesson plan that examines these fixed notions. Begin this type of activity by creating a "safe space" where everyone feels open to sharing and listening. Many things can arise during such lessons, including topics that are difficult to talk about. It is important that students are given the opportunity to discuss their fears and assumptions about the issue(s) they will be tackling. By doing so, the teacher will gain a better sense of the students as individuals and, most importantly, the youth will express their various feelings, support the identity of their peers, and forge ahead into their service project more open and understanding.

Teamwork & Skill-Building

Many lesson plans should be devoted to having the students work together building upon their communication and relationship skills. Whether this means peer-to-peer tutoring, icebreaking activities, or group projects, they will need to learn how to successfully unify as a collective team.

Skill building is critical in any service-learning project but especially one that lasts a whole semester. Youth are not typically seen as change-makers, civic role models, and serious citizens. They will need to learn how to speak in public, interview adults, manage conflicts, write articulately, and communicate on a broad scale.

Keep in mind though that not all students will equally excel at every skill. This is why it is important to place them in different roles. Some might be project leaders while others will be detail-oriented and organized. From the beginning, conduct a survey asking students to identify their interests and strengths. Are they creative, free-thinking, tech-savvy, independent, vocal? If a student says that they are particularly good with computers, put them in charge of working with media tools and Internet research. If you are in a math class whose service project is to help a grassroots organization work on their budget, ask the tech-savvy students to make figure and data graphs.

For more on student roles, including an activity, please reference Lesson One in the Global Youth Service Day Service-Learning Curriculum.

http://ysa.org/Portals/0/PDF%20Documents/cg2007pt1.pdf

Resources & Fundraising

It is important to have a handful of organizations, parent groups, or teachers that will support your students' semester-long service project. Whether this means providing food, making contacts, donations, assisting in project planning or volunteering, a network of individuals willing to help is important to planning any stable project. Ask your students to decide who they want onboard, and let them write letters or make phone calls inviting these people to assist in the project.

Provide the sponsors with an incentive to help. For example, will you use the organization's name and logo on all of your handouts and tools? Will you provide individual recognition to the volunteers? By giving back to these various groups, you are likely to build a shared relationship and strong web of support.

Many successful service-learning projects have happened on a very small budget but this isn't to say that raising money or receiving donations will not help your venture. For donations, you can hold many typical social events: car washes, bake sales, artwork sales, raffles, etc. These events can be a great way to start off your project and get your students working as a group. To learn more about fundraising and support, please reference Chapter Six in the Global Youth Service Day's Planning Toolkit.

http://ysa.org/Portals/0/PDF%20Documents/tk2007pt6.pdf

Additionally, consider taking advantage of an organization or nonprofit grant. For example, Youth Service America hands out many community service and service-learning grants yearly that are underwritten by sponsors such as State Farm Companies Foundation and The Walt Disney Company. These grants are useful because they are designed to double as teaching tools that guide applicants through all the components of a service project. Whether it's financial planning, including diverse participants or engaging public officials, YSA's grants will help you outline a successful project.

For additional service grants, please also visit the Corporation for National and Community Service's website; http://www.nationalservice.gov

Below you will find a list of grant application resources:

http://ysa.org/AwardsGrants/tabid/58/Default.aspx
http://www.grantsalert.com/resources.cfm
http://servicelearning.org/instant_info/funding_sources/index.php?popup_id=731
http://grants.gov/
http://www.youthactionnet.org/yan_awards
http://captainplanetfoundation.org/default.aspx?pid=3&tab=apply
http://www.tolerance.org/teach/grants/index.jsp

Stage two: Action

This is the stage where students will execute the service project that they have spent the last few weeks and lessons designing. During this part of the curriculum, students will make tangible connections. These connections can come in many forms and take various roles ranging from a behind-the-scenes internship to direct fieldwork. The Action stage is wholly experiential and will challenge youth to manage their service project while being confronted with community issues and human-need realities that are difficult or unjust. Yet, by gaining firsthand experience, building relationships, and taking time to reflect, students will realize the need for and importance of meaningful service work.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
Anne Frank

Critical Action

What is critical action? Service-learning provides the opportunity to participate in activities that raise consciousness, increase equality, improve social conditions, examine injustice, and develop youth identities as civically engaged citizens. It is a combination of action research and critical reflection where students will participate with their communities in service while strategically formulating solutions and resolving issues to foster such things as equality and shared commitment for a better world.

In one volume of Rethinking Our Classrooms, the editors say, "We want students to see themselves as truth-tellers and change-makers. If we ask children to critique the world but then fail to encourage them to act, our classrooms can degenerate into factories for cynicism." It is important to avoid the "apathy over action" consequence that can happen when our service activities include no critical/strategic component or successful outcome (regardless of how small).

Types of Service Action

Many service-learning articles and guides examine the different types of engagement that youth can participate in during their service project. They are defined as direct, indirect, and advocacy. It is important that after choosing your service project, you decide as a group which level will ensure success. What level will enable the most change to happen?

To better understand the various levels of service, please see the below explanations:

Direct – Firsthand service that provides students with personal connections to individuals and causes.

DIRECT Service Examples

- Work w/ environmental groups on climate change
- Teach ESL to non-English speaking groups
- Provide vocational skills to incarcerated youth or adults

Indirect – Emphasizes organizational assistance and strategic operation.

INDIRECT Service Examples

- Make clay dinnerware for low-income families and shelters
- Raise money and resources for disaster victims
- Fundraise for malaria prevention

Advocacy – Focus is on writing and communication skills for public awareness. With advocacy work, you will need to check with your program sponsors regulations regarding authorized activity.

ADVOCACY Examples

- Design information campaigns for a national/global issue
- Create PSAs advertising solutions to community issues
- Conduct a survey & present findings to local changemakers

Involving the Media or Public Officials

By involving public officials, journalists, magazines, newspapers, television, and radio broadcasters in your service project, students will be able to reach a broader audience, ensure high impact, and create important awareness around their issue. This communications strategy is twofold: not only does it draw attention to the community or issue the students are servicing but it provides meaningful recognition for the youth, the volunteers, the sponsors, and the community.

See Youth Service America's Media Training and Elected Official's Manual:

http://servenet.org/Toolkit/VolunteerResources/ToolstoEngagetheMedia/tabid/220/Default.aspx
http://ysa.org/Portals/0/PDF%20Documents/Engage_Elected_Official_in_NYSD_Project.pdf

Time Requirement

According to the Shelley Billig article entitled Unpacking What Works in Service Learning, "Recent research has shown that projects must be of sufficient duration, typically at least a semester of 70 hours long to have an impact on students…Fewer hours simply do not give the students enough time to grapple with difficult issues or to have a deep enough experience to make the learning endure." (Billig, Root & Jesse 2005)

While the debate is ongoing as to the "right" amount of required service, the benefit of a Semester of Service is that the flexibility of the 14 weeks allows one to reach lengthier duration goals. By designing this as a semester-long project, there is ample opportunity to provide students with substantial fieldwork time so that they can become deeply submerged in strategic service with their partnering community(s).

Having said the above, a weekly balance between class time and integrated community time is probably most feasible. While planning your curriculum, it is important to also take into consideration what constraints your school has, as well as anything else within or outside of the capacity of your class. Authentic experience with a strong level of achievement and success is the ultimate objective.

Suggested Timeline

Time (2008)	Curriculum Component
January 2nd * - January 21st the start date will depend on when you return to school	**Semester of Service Introduction** • Preparation Introduction • Objectives • Identity & Belief Lessons • Teamwork & Skill-building • Addressing National and Global issues and beginning to choose what students want to address in their service projects
January 21st	**Martin Luther King Day of Service** • Conduct initial Service Project linked to main service Action • See http://www.mlkday.gov/ for information on the MLK Day of Service
January 22nd – February 18th	**Preparation Continued** • Identifying Service Issue • Identifying Community • Identifying Partners and Support • Fundraising, Grant Applications • Developing Media Skills • Writing Press Letters • Research & Documentation • Project logistics including Field Days versus In-Class Days
February 18th – March 31st	**Action** • Indirect, Direct, & Advocacy • Strategic & Critical Action • Working with Media & Public Officials • Fieldwork & Documentation • Ongoing Reflection • Class Presentations
March 31st – April 24th	**Culminate Action Component** **Begin Reflection & Evaluation** • Journal-Writing Evaluation • Questioning & Strategic-Thinking • Photo Journals, Evaluative Essays, Op Eds & Online Blogs • Appreciative Inquiry Exercise (see later on)
April 25th – April 27th	**Global Youth Service Day** • Beginning of Celebration • Conduct a highly visible Closing Celebratory Service Event involving students, community, sponsors, volunteers and media • See http://ysa.org/ for more information on GYSD projects
April 28th – June 16th* *the end date will depend on the last day of your school year	**Continued Reflection and Evaluation** • Student Evaluation of Project • Teacher Evaluation of Project • Teacher Evaluation of Students • Community & Partner Evaluation of Project **Continued Celebration** • Recognition & Incentives • Demonstration (Teaching Others) • Learning Festival • Public Awareness & Outreach

Stage three: Reflection and Evaluation

Organized reflection and critical evaluation play important roles in all educational practices but especially service-learning. Through this process, students analyze, question, and share what they have experienced. Reflection is a time to create new meaning and understandings through conversations and potential "a-ha!" moments. While structured reflection should take place as a unit at the end of the curriculum it is also important to include reflection components throughout each lesson plan. By continuing to reflect, you can ensure that everything is being connected back to the learning and the students' development. Lastly, evaluation enables educators, youth, community participants, and other project supporters to change and positively enhance the work that was done in addition to any future action.

Journal-Writing

This is a tried and true strategy for getting students to contemplate what it is that they are doing. It is recommended that students keep journals throughout the entire Semester of Service and that the teacher read them weekly in order to understand what is working, what needs improvement, and how the students can be better supported. These journals should be used as a place for further exploration and as a tool to evaluate the student's work and participation.

Additionally, it is a wonderful dialogue if these journals can be shared with the service recipients. By allowing the recipients to make comments and debate ideas, the students are pushed to think further and more complexly about their work and the service issue. Please see the links below for journal writing references:

http://www.tcc.edu/students/specialized/civic/servicelearning/students/journal.htm
http://www.nmc.edu/socialscience/service-learning/tips.html

Questioning & Strategic Thinking

It is important in all stages but especially the reflection stage, to encourage students to question and think complexly about their service work. For example, if you take the common service-learning example of students cleaning up a park and using their field collections for a science class experiment, students should be prompted to not only examine the field material but also the bigger and more involved picture.

> Why is the park dirty? What is the socioeconomic status of the local community and is this a factor in how much attention is being put into the condition of the park? Are there no littering rules or guidelines in place?

- How is this un-cleanliness affecting issues such as our environment and local crime statistics?

- How are the bacteria we found studying the field collections affecting the health and well-being of the surrounding community?

- If there are homeless people living in the polluted park, why are there so many individuals uncared for and where are the local shelters?

When a project takes place without engaging students in strategic thinking and critical action, unfortunately the activity merely models a temporary initiative to involve youth in community service. All too often both teachers and students find themselves saying, "Ok, we cleaned up the park, studied the soil and trash materials but now what?" Young people should be given the ability to tackle some of our world's most pressing social issues through deep, long-term engagement. To do this, we must look at our service-learning projects from every angle and every plan for the goal of change.

"Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ideas for Reflection Activities

- Have students write letters to public officials or other professionals about their experience and what solutions they see for change.

- Write an evaluative essay where students reflect on their own values and thoughts both pre and post service project. Have their opinions changed?

- Design small focus groups where students reflect upon a specific component of the service project.

- Encourage students to take pictures throughout the entire process and then have them create photo essays to be shared.

- Have students role-play a situation they experienced and invite the other students to respond with questions and opinions.

- Ask students to create individual blogs/online journals sharing their ideas and encouraging other people to post their opinions as well.

- Have each student write an op-ed to different newspapers and follow through to encourage that they get published.

Evaluation & Appreciative Inquiry

Student Evaluation

After the action component is through and Reflection lesson plans are finished, it is important to allow the students to critically evaluate and analyze the service-learning project and its outcome. Students should consider what did and did not work as well as what they would do again, what they would change, how the project succeeded, and how it needs to be improved.

Teachers can also use students' evaluations as a grading tool. Consider asking students to write narratives evaluating how they individually performed. Provide them with questions that ask them to consider how they developed throughout the project, how much effort they put in, what they learned, where they think they excelled, what challenges they met, and how they would change if they could do it over again. By giving this self-evaluation a reflective format, students will be encouraged to deeply mull over their performance, role in the project, and personal accountability.

Community Evaluation

In addition to having the students participate in evaluation, it is important to ask the sponsors, community volunteers, school colleagues, and any other supporters to do the same. Outside feedback will provide a qualitative understanding of the projects impact and success. Below are example evaluation forms for community participants:

http://studentaffairs.case.edu/civicengagement/learning/courses/doc/commeval.pdf
https://www.csbsju.edu/servicelearning/partners/studentevalforcommpartners.aspx

Teacher Evaluation and Rubrics

When the teacher outlines his or her objectives in the Preparation stage, they should also design a rubric for project evaluation. There are many components to incorporate in a rubric including but not limited to: meeting community needs, meeting academic standards, critical reflection, improving a social situation, developing citizenship skills, and future planning. Below are links to example rubrics:

http://servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/SLrubric2.html
http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/lessonplans/pdf/insights.service.a.pdf
http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/86F7D7E3-8BEF-4F09-9DFE-6A21E9E657F2/3535/rubric_best.pdf

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a method of reflection or evaluation that takes a positivist approach and suggests that instead of focusing on the negative aspects of a situation, we need to focus on the constructive in humankind in order to obtain optimal results.

Mapped out below is a "four-dimensional appreciative inquiry technique" as adapted in Appreciate Inquiry with Youth to Create Meaningful Community Projects by J. Morsillo & A. Fisher. These phases were designed to enhance an individual's experience with transformative service-learning projects. The Bases and their Action partner represent affirmative approaches to planning and deliberating a project that utilizes an Appreciative Inquiry approach. The Youth Participation column offers activity suggestions for these approaches. For more information, please reference the above articles at:

http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Morsillo_19(1).pdf.

Base	Action	Youth Participation
Discovery	Appreciating the best of what is	Identity affirmation with passion game
Dream	Envisioning what could be	Community visions for improvement w/ positive well-being quest and transformative learning discussions
Design	Co-constructing what should be	Creating community projects w/ cycles of planning, acting, and reflecting
Destiny	Sustaining what will be	Enhanced narratives of community connectedness

Service-learning, both as a style of teaching and a socially integrated education, can benefit greatly from appreciative inquiry because it requires that participants on both sides of a project think critically about the strengths of a community and use those assets as the tools to repairing whatever issue – environmental, injustice, poverty, hunger, etc. – exists. By using the above model for your reflection and evaluation lessons, one is able to design this stage as a "how can we take what's already good and use it to make what's bad, better." Reflecting on the positive also helps in alleviating hopelessness in students that something is unfixable or too big to be repaired. This approach to reflection leaves room for tangible future action based around positive and applied problem-solving. By changing our perceptions we can change our results.

Future Action

Based on students' project evaluations and the post-action conclusions that they arrive at, future action should always be planned.

Questions to consider when planning for future action:

> How can we ensure that this issue is still being serviced and not forgotten?
> What resources are needed to sustain our successful work?

> What is still needed? What do we want to look at now?
> Can we pass on future action to the next group of students?
> How can we incorporate future action into our next curriculum?

These are questions that both the teacher and the students should answer. For the teacher, future action may mean continuing to implement the service-learning project in his or her next class or curricula. For the students, this may mean organizing a school group that meets once a week with a lead teacher. For the school, this may mean designing an online site where other educators, community members, and students are able to share projects and gather ideas for additional service-learning work.

Stage four: Celebration & Demonstration

Celebrating the work of the students, highlighting the community, creating awareness around the issue and providing recognition to all participants is very important to a Semester of Service. Celebration ensures that the service work is seen and heard and that students and community participants are valued and applauded for their roles as citizens and social leaders. Whether your celebration is a highly visible networking event, elaborately organized learning festival, or a simple and intimate showcase, attention to this stage of the curriculum is essential to continuing the service-learning, reinforcing a commitment for global change, and bolstering youth empowerment.

Recognition & Incentive

The students' work can be recognized in many ways and not just within their school. The work could be displayed publicly and have an article written about the students and the project in the local newspaper or school newsletter. Appreciation for students' productive community contribution serves as an incentive for them to continue onto future service and it motivates students to model their good deeds in an effort to promote positive change and social contribution amongst other individuals.

It is necessary that the students recognize the community that they worked with. Incentive and visibility are important roles here because when a group knows that their work or community challenges will be publicly highlighted, it is a reason for them to participate.

Lastly, ensure that the students respect the participating communities and partners with thoughtful gratitude and thank-you notes.

Demonstration (Teaching Others)

Various texts that are written on service-learning also combine the Celebration stage with demonstration. Demonstration is a strong method to help youth process the work they have done and continue to develop their leadership skills. By demonstrating what they learned, solutions and ideas for future participation, students can share their accomplishments while sparking awareness and potential action with audience members unaware of particular global issues and the importance of service-learning – a service in and of itself!

Examples of Celebration/Demonstration Activities:

> Learning Festivals that demonstrate how we can help our communities.
> Public Awareness Sessions
> Awards and Nomination ceremony
> Onsite Open House that takes place where the service happened.
> Press events
> School Assembly to talk about sustainable change solutions.
> Collaborative party with community partners.
> Creating a website, handbook or workshop to train others.

Additionally, demonstration is important in the effort to increase young people's visibility as change-makers. Because youth are too often seen as second-class citizens, allowing them to teach others about their service-project, the community need they addressed and their proposals for long-term change, educators are subsequently supporting a renewal of positive youth representation.

Celebration should not been seen as the end of a service-learning project and certainly not the definitive end of service itself. Celebration can happen throughout the entire curriculum. By celebrating small accomplishments you will reinforce that even the tiniest of positive developments are noteworthy. This stage should replenish one's commitment to service work and stress the importance of continuing to tackle unmet national and global issues.

"The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness."
Dalai Lama

Conclusion

As a final section of the Semester of Service Strategy Guide, you will find below a list of additional recommended resources and texts to further inform your curriculum and project development. Service-learning is best practiced when formatted and designed with meaningful connections and deep learning. The information provided in this guide and in the supplemental resources is intended to encourage and facilitate practitioners in framing their service-learning projects within an academic semester and with the intention to facilitate long-term connections between youth, community action and change. By giving youth these tools, educators and students will work together to ensure that the needs of our communities and our world go neither unnoticed nor unsolved.

Seasons of Service
January 2008 – June 2008

January
National Mentoring Month

21st – Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
21st - 25th - No Name Calling Week

February
National Black History Month

11th-17th Random Acts of Kindness Month
21st– International Languages Day

March
Youth Art Month
National Nutrition Month
National Women's History Month
Red Cross Month

3rd – Read Across America Day
8th – International Women's Day
9th -15th – Girl Scout Week
22nd – World Water Day

April
Keep America Beautiful Month

2nd – Tobacco Free Kids Annual Celebration
7th – World Health Day
25th – 28th – Global Youth Service Day
22nd – Earth Day
15th – 21st – National Volunteer Week

May
National Foster Care Month
National Family Month

2nd – National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
4th – 10th – Be Kind to Animals Week
5th – Join Hands Day
21st – World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
25th – National Missing Children's Day
31st – World No Tobacco Day

June

5th – World Environmental Day
11th – World Pollution Day
12th – World Day against Child Labor
20th – World Refugee Day
31st - César Chávez Day of Service & Learning
31st – April 6th – Act! Speak! Build! Week

Resource List

YSA & CNCS Websites

Martin Luther King Day of Service
http://www.mlkday.gov/

Global Youth Service Day
http://ysa.org/gysd

Curriculum Resources

Youth Service America's Global Youth Service Day Service-Learning Curriculum Guide & Planning Tool Kit
http://ysa.org/GYSD/NGYSDTools/NGYSDToolsPlanningMaterials/tabid/118/Default.aspx

Martin Luther King Day of Service Resources
http://www.mlkday.gov/resources/tips/index.asp

Corporation for National & Community Service Resource Center
http://nationalserviceresources.org/

Professional Development Opportunities

http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pub_toolecd
http://www.compact.org/initiatives/csd_institute/
https://programs.regweb.com/metro/NYLC2008/index.cfm
http://www.servicelearning.org/events_jobs/slconf_events/index.php

Texts & Articles

A Practical Guide to Service Learning: Strategies for Positive Development in Schools
by Felicia L. Wilczenski & Susan M. Coomey

Adolescents' Participation in Service Activities and Its Impact on Academic, Behavioral, and Civic Outcomes
by J. Schmidt, L. Shumow & H. Kackar

Appreciative inquiry with youth to create meaningful community projects
by J. Morsillo & A. Fisher

Empowering youth to change their world: Identifying key components of a community service program to promote positive development
by R. Lakin and A. Mahoney

Justice-Learning: Service-Learning as Justice-Oriented Education
by D. W. Butin

Learning that Lasts; How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities
by Education Commission of the States

Pedagogy of the Oppressed
by Paolo Freire

Race, Poverty, and Social Justice: Multidisciplinary Perspectives through Service Learning (Service Learning for Civic Engagement Series)
by Robert A. Corrigan

Rethinking Our Classrooms by Rethinking Schools Service-Learning: Alignment with State Standards
by Terry Pickeral of Education Commission of the States

Service-Learning: The Essence of Pedagogy
by Andrew Furco & Shelly Billig

Support for K–12 Service-Learning Practice: A Brief Review of the Research
by S. Billig

The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action
by Cathryn Berger Kaye

The Evolution of Critical Service-Learning: Four Problematics
by M. Masucci & A. Renner

The Influence of Service Learning on Student's Personal and Social Development
by L. Simons & B. Cleary

Unpacking What Works in Service-Learning: Promising Research-Based Practices to Improve Student Outcomes
by Shelley Billig

What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy
by J. Westheimer and J. Kahne